

Florida tops in US for solar installations so far in 2023, new report says

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The Sunshine State is finally realizing its solar-energy generation potential.

Florida topped all other U.S. states for solar [energy](#) installations during the first half of 2023 and is on track to upend California and Texas, the top solar installers of 2021 and 2022, for solar energy capacity increase

in 2023.

The new figures were reported in the latest Solar Market Insight report released Thursday by energy analytics firm Wood Mackenzie and the Solar Energy Industries Association.

The report shows that Florida added 2,499 megawatts of solar-generation capacity during the first half of the year, far surpassing the 1,648 MW added by California and the 1,292 MW added by Texas.

Florida's increase for the first six months exceeded the amount of solar capacity ever installed in the state during an entire year, an SEIA news release stated.

It contributes to a record 32 gigawatts—a gigawatt is equal to 1,000 megawatts—of new solar capacity projected for the United States in 2023. That's a 52% increase over 2022 and a single-year record for the nation, according to the release.

Wood Mackenzie expects total operating solar capacity in the U.S. to increase from 153 GW today to 375 GW by 2028.

In June, the United States had 1,171 GW of total electricity generation capacity from all sources, including [fossil fuels](#), according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Of that, 318 GW were from renewable sources. Florida, the nation's third most populous state, had 69 GW of generating capacity, of which 8.6 GW was from renewable sources.

The report attributes this year's increase to easing of COVID-19-related supply chain challenges and restrictive trade policies that slowed growth in 2022. Incentives adopted as part of the Inflation Reduction Act are helping as well, it said.

New domestic manufacturing investments are expected to improve supply conditions over the next few years, the news release states. "If these factory announcements materialize, by 2026 U.S. solar module manufacturing output will be 10 times greater than it is today," the release states.

The increase of Florida's solar generation capacity during the first half of the year was largely a result of utility-scale growth. Of the 2,499 MW added to the grid, 2,159 MW were installed by utilities.

Florida Power & Light owns 1,769 MW of the increased capacity, followed by Duke Energy, which added 389 MW.

But Florida's residential solar capacity is increasing as well. Residential property owners added 332 MW of solar capacity during the first six months—second-most in the U.S.

Data compiled by the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows that Florida residents installed rooftop solar at a fast pace over the past two years.

The number of customers participating in a net metering arrangement with a utility doubled between June 2021 and June 2023—from 87,975 to 182,239, EIA data shows.

The data also showed that FPL surpassed Duke Energy for most net metering customers over the two-year period.

In June 2021, FPL had 27,082 rooftop solar customers selling excess electricity back to the grid while Duke had 41,193.

Two years later, FPL had 80,552 net metering customers to Duke's 75,264.

FPL net metering customers sold back 38,814 megawatt hours of electricity in June 2023 —166% more than the 14,563 MWh sold back in June 2021.

The company has been aggressively expanding its utility-scale solar energy capacity for several years. In June 2022, as part of an announced plan to eliminate [carbon emissions](#) by 2045, FPL said it would add 50,000 MW of solar generating [capacity](#) to its then-current 500 MW.

Yet, months earlier, the utility helped write legislation that would have gradually decreased the "buy-back" rate for customers who sold excess power created by their solar panels. The utility argued that being forced to pay retail rates for the excess electricity was unfair to customers without rooftop solar systems.

Although the legislation favored by FPL passed, Gov. Ron DeSantis vetoed it, citing his desire not to add to Floridians' financial burden during a year of rising prices.

Asked to comment on the data, FPL spokeswoman Florencia Olivera said by email, "We remain as focused as ever on consistently delivering low-cost, reliable energy to our customers. FPL's solar fleet—one of the largest in the nation—allows us to do just that. In fact, FPL's solar energy centers saved customers \$375 million in avoided fuel costs in 2022 amid the worldwide spike in natural gas prices."

Nationwide, the number of net metering customers increased 42.5%, from 2.78 million to 3.96 million while the number of megawatt hours sold back to the grid increased 27.9%, from 154,451 MWh to 197,535 MWh, between June 2021 and June 2023, according to EIA.

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